



ACCESS AND ARTIFACT HANDLING Workshop Part B

Marie Desrochers

Utah Division of Arts and Museums

February 2, 2023: Grand County Library, Moab

10 am - 5 pm



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES



UTAHHUMANITIES

Ideas in Action



Utah Division of
Arts & Museums

GOALS

Gain a better
understanding of Key
Themes...



Key Themes

- Collections Access and Preservation
- Object types and sensitivities
- Handling and moving objects
- Assessing and reporting condition
- Object Labeling

AGENDA

Handout



Access and Artifact Handling

Workshop Part B Agenda

Grand County Library, Moab

February 2, 2023

Learning Goals for Workshop pt B

1. Understand collection handling sensitivities by object type
2. Understand best practices for moving a variety of types of objects
3. Learn how to mitigate the the impacts of physical forces and dissociation during handling
4. Understand why and how to perform condition assessments and incident reports
5. Learn to label a variety of types of objects

Agenda

| | |
|--|--|
| 10:00-10:30 | Begin promptly with introductions |
| 10:30-11:00 | Review key concepts and homework assignments: Access, Deterioration, Significance |
| 11:10-11:25 | Primary Agents of Concern (for today): Physical Forces and Dissociation |
| 11:25-11:35 | BREAK |
| <hr/> | |
| 11:35-12:15 | Object Types by Material & Introduction to Condition Reporting |
| 12:15-1:00 | LUNCH |
| <hr/> | |
| 1:15-1:45 | Activity on Condition Reporting: Fitness for access/impact of access; incident reporting |
| 1:45-2:05 | Instruction on Object Moves and Handling |
| 2:05-2:25 | Instruction on Object Labeling and Dissociation |
| 2:15-2:35 | BREAK |
| <hr/> | |
| *Walk Across the Street to Moab Museum* | |
| 2:35-3:35 | Tour Moab Museum |
| 3:35-3:45 | BREAK |
| *Return to Library and split participants into two groups* | |
| 3:45-4:15 | ACTIVITY: Object Handling and Moving (group 1 then group 2) |
| 4:15-4:45 | ACTIVITY: Object Labeling (group 2 then group 1) |
| 4:45-5:00 | Review activities, evaluations, and wrap up |

[Brief] re-INTRODUCTIONS

Please share the following:

1. Your name, where you work, and your role
2. Professionally OR personally, what is something coming up soon for you that you are looking forward to and why?



WORKSHOP 1 KEY THEMES & HOMEWORK REVIEW

Key Themes

- Collections Access and Preservation
- Mission, Collections Policy, and Preservation
- Ten Agents of Deterioration
- Assessment of Collections Significance
- Object Labeling



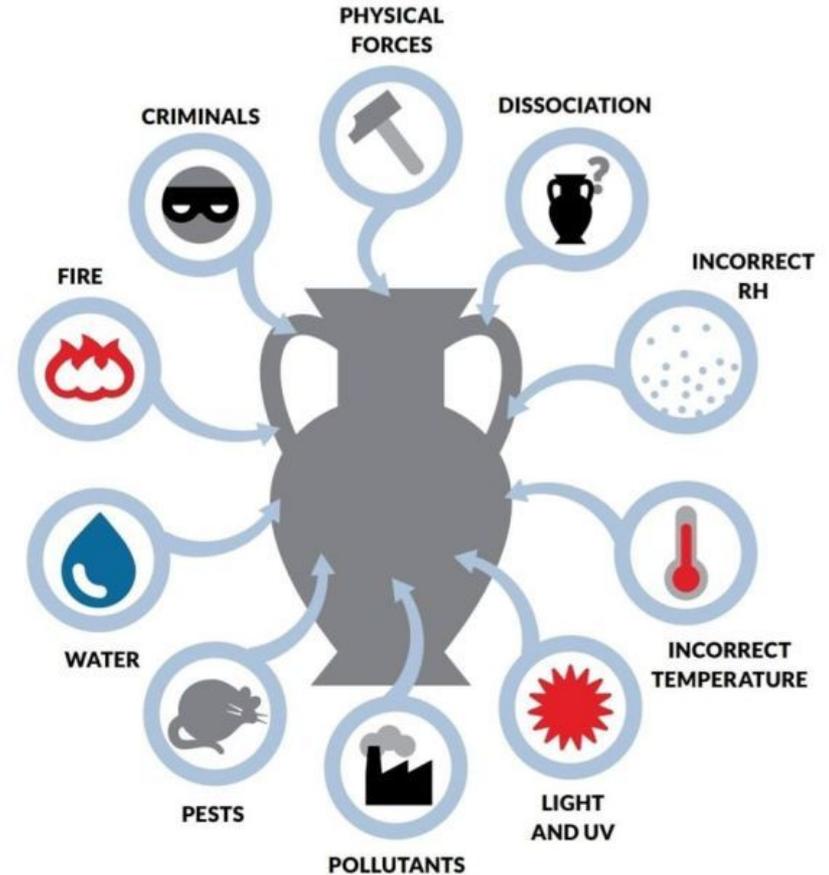
Workshop Part I: January 6, 2022
Summit County Historical Museum, Coalville
Access and Artifact Handling

Within your own collection, identify objects and potential sources of damage that correspond to each of the ten agents of deterioration. In the access column, note how access to the object is provided, noting any relationship between accessibility and sources of damage.

| Object | Agent of Deterioration | Source/Damage | Access |
|--------|------------------------|---------------|--------|
| | Physical Forces | | |
| | Fire | | |

Discussion:

What did you discover about how the agents of deterioration relate to access at your institution?



Graphic by Centroid PM

TEN AGENTS OF DETERIORATION

1. Physical Forces
2. Fire
3. Pests
4. Water
5. Light
6. Incorrect Relative Humidity
7. Incorrect Temperature
8. Thieves and Vandals
9. Pollution
10. Dissociation/Custodial Neglect



TEN AGENTS OF DETERIORATION

1. Physical Forces
2. Fire
3. Pests
4. Water
5. Light
6. Incorrect Relative Humidity
7. Incorrect Temperature
8. Thieves and Vandals
9. Pollution
10. Dissociation/Custodial Neglect



PHYSICAL FORCES

Energetic forces that cause damage to objects due to impact, shock, vibration, pressure, and abrasion



DISSOCIATION/CUSTODIAL NEGLIGENCE

Natural tendency for ordered systems to fall apart over time, causing loss of objects, or object-related data, or the ability to retrieve or associate objects and data.



BREAK (10 Minutes)



OBJECT TYPES & MATERIALS

OBJECT "TYPES"

CERAMIC

PAINTINGS

TEXTILES

STONE

PAPER

PLASTIC

BONE

WOOD

LEATHER

GLASS

METAL

PAPER

PHOTOGRAPH





METAL



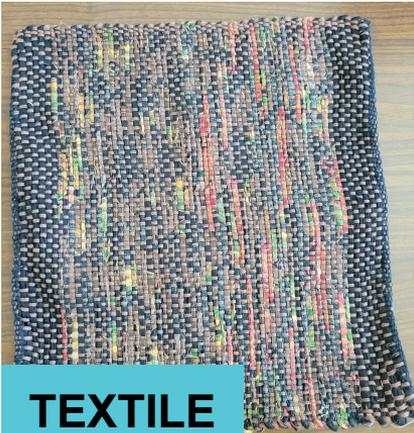
PLANT FIBER



CERAMIC



WOOD



TEXTILE



STONE



PHOTOGRAPH



CERAMIC

ORGANIC

PAPER

WOOD

TEXTILES

PLANT MATERIAL

LEATHER

COMPOSITE

PAINTINGS

PLASTIC

PHOTOGRAPHS

INORGANIC

METAL

STONE

CERAMIC

GLASS



Just some subcategories

ORGANIC

PAPER — manuscripts
— drawings
— books

WOOD — furniture
— musical instruments
— architecture

TEXTILES — rugs
— Costume (clothing)
— upholstery

PLANT MATERIAL — basketry
— netting/tools
— sacred/spiritual objects

LEATHER — tack (saddles etc)
— upholstery
— books

COMPOSITE

PAINTINGS
— pastel
— acrylic
— oil on canvas

PLASTIC
— toys
— commercially manufactured objects
— ww I & II tools/memorabilia

PHOTOGRAPHS
— daguerreotype
— silver gelatin
— film

INORGANIC

METAL — tools
— fasteners, buckles
— automotive elements

STONE — tools
— fossils
— art

CERAMIC — dishes/china
— plumbing
— medical

GLASS — dining glassware
— architectural
— industrial/laboratory



COMPOSITE OBJECTS

Objects composed of multiple categories of materials that each interact with uniquely with the environment

(hint: maybe most things in your collection)



1983-008-006
W.R. Thompson
Company (Rifle,
Colo.)

Example

Date Made: Circa 1896-1936

Material: LEATHER, METAL,
WOOD, WOOL



Example

Alt Name: Telephone, Coin Operated

Artist/Maker: Western Electric Company

Date Made: Circa 1900-1920

Material: METAL, PLASTIC, RUBBER



Example

Alt Name: Hat

Date Made: Circa 1920

Material: WOOL, LEATHER, COTTON
CLOTH, PAPER



Example

Alt Name: Pin, button
Artist/Maker: Salt Lake Stamp Co.
Date Made: Circa 1965
Material: PLASTIC, METAL



MATERIAL DIFFERENCES IN THE SAME ENVIRONMENT



| Effects | Low sensitivity | Medium sensitivity | High sensitivity | Very high sensitivity |
|---------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| ±40% RH | None-small damage | Small-severe damage | Severe damage | Severe damage |
| ±20% RH | None-tiny damage | None-small damage | Small-severe damage | Severe damage |
| ±10% RH | No damage | None-tiny damage | None-small damage | Small-severe damage |
| ±5% RH | No damage | No damage | None-tiny damage | None-small damage |

Various levels of response to fluctuations in RH
([Canadian Conservation Institute](#))

MATERIAL DIFFERENCES IN THE SAME ENVIRONMENT



| Effects | Low sensitivity | Medium sensitivity | High sensitivity | Very high sensitivity |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Flat sheets of paper, film, tape, with an image or data layer may delaminate, fracture, or distort permanently. | <p>Support layer with finely dispersed image/data layers.</p> <p>E.g., most single sheets of paper with print, halftones, line drawings, inks, washes.</p> <p>Laminates with low differences in expansion. E.g. most case-bound books. Most CDs. Commercial signs painted on metal.</p> | <p>Layered structures with moderate strength, moderate differences in expansion. E.g., most photographs, negatives and film. Most magnetic records. Thin, well adhered inks on parchment, such as deeds. Gouache on paper. Book bindings of vellum and or wood.</p> | <p>Layered structures with poor strength, moderate to high differences in expansion. E.g., Thick images on parchment. Globes. Thick oil-resin images on paper or cloth. Objects listed as medium vulnerability that have weakened substantially due to UV exposure, or aging already causing flaking.</p> | <p>Large reactive (to fluctuations) sheets that are restrained at the periphery.</p> <p>E.g., large paper sheets adhered to stretchers, 19th Century photo-portraits on fabric and stretchers. Large prints adhered at all four corners (usually tear near the point of restraint.)</p> |

Various levels of response to fluctuations in RH, paper objects (Canadian Conservation Institute)

MATERIAL DIFFERENCES IN THE SAME ENVIRONMENT



| Effects | Low sensitivity | Medium sensitivity | High sensitivity | Very high sensitivity |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Wood or wood assemblies may crack, split, delaminate, or distort permanently | <p>Single wood components, or assemblies designed to eliminate stresses, or. E.g., floating panels in furniture or room paneling; tongue and groove planking nailed or bolted on edge only such as wainscotting, wood boxes on farm machinery (unless jammed due to painting, warping), hollowed out totem poles, wooden tool handles.</p> <p>Assemblies with prior damage that allows stress release.</p> <p>E.g. most old tables where all screws and joints are loose, any panels already split.</p> | <p>Wood assemblies with uniformly distributed stresses during fluctuations.</p> <p>E.g., most plain wood furniture with tight joints, no prior splits, most veneers and marquetry that cover a continuous piece below, such as most 18th Century - 19th Century chests of drawers, fine tables. Furniture made with plywoods, such as many Victorian catalog pieces.</p> <p>Note that fluctuation to higher RH may not always cause visible damage, since many joints, panels are invisibly crushed</p> | <p>Wood assemblies with concentration of stresses during fluctuations.</p> <p>E.g., Veneer over corner joints, such as many wardrobe doors, Victorian secretaries, Art Deco furniture. Fretwork, applied wooden ornaments. Assemblies with bolts, nails, screws that hold both sides of a single plank. Many musical instruments.</p> | <p>Wood assemblies with attached or inlaid metal, horn, shell, etc. that spans more than 1cm across the wood grain. Attachment or inlays may delaminate or buckle.</p> <p>E.g. West coast masks with abalone, 18th Century-19th Century fine furniture, clocks, with inlays.</p> |

Various levels of response to fluctuations in RH, wooden objects (Canadian Conservation Institute)

CONDITION REPORTING

CONDITION REPORT

Tells you the condition of an object at a specific point in time. Created by examining an object's stability, deterioration, and previous damage



WHY CONDITION REPORT?

1. Helps you track condition of an object over time.
2. Creates a tool for prioritizing conservation treatment
3. Shows if it is stable enough for exhibition, loan, types of handling and access
4. Informs design of exhibition and storage
5. Insurance evaluations



WHEN SHOULD YOU CONDITION REPORT?

1. When an item is pulled out for an exhibit
2. After an item has been exhibited
3. Before an item goes out on loan
4. When an item comes back from loan
5. When the object first enters the collection (first time cataloged)
6. When the item is pulled for research
7. Before the piece is sent to a conservator
8. While doing an inventory



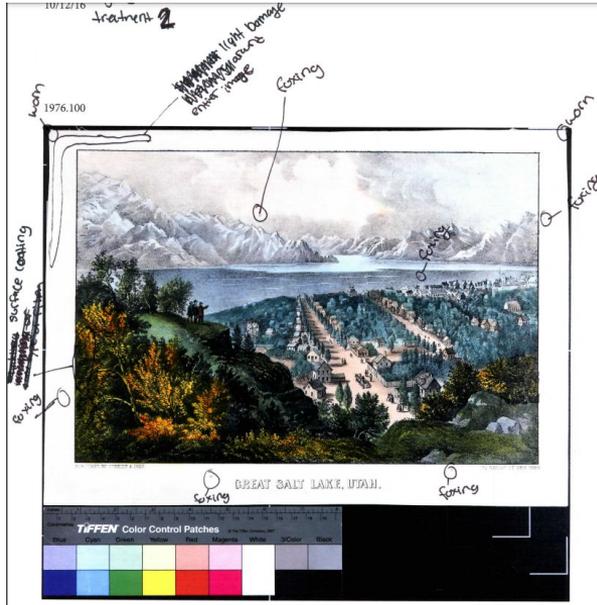
CONDITION REPORT

A condition diagram is a helpful way to document deterioration or damage



- Damage to image, binder, and/or lacquer due to loss, abrasion, flaking, cracking, crazing, and planar distortion
- Mechanical damage to primary or secondary support resulting in tears, folds, creases, and planar distortions
- Discoloration due to material off-set, acid migration localized discoloration and staining, and tide lines
- Silver Image deterioration such as localized fading, mirroring, and yellowing
- Iron corrosion
- Tape and/or tape adhesive
- Accretions and localized surface dirt
- Mold and/or mold damage
- Complete loss of primary and secondary supports, binder, and image

CONDITION REPORT



| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Object ID: | UMFA1976.100 | | |
| Synopsis: | Currier and Ives American Great Salt Lake, Utah lithograph | | |
| Dimensions: | image: h: 8 3/8 in x w: 12 3/8 in; sheet: h: 10 in x w: 14 in | | |
| Department: | UMFA Collections Management | | |
| Collection: | Print | | |
| Location: | Art Registration.c2.d4 | | |
| Condition: | Good | Date: 3/1/2019 | Done By: RW |
| Condition Description: | No changes from previous condition report 5/7/2018 | | |
| Condition Notes: | | | |
| Condition: | Good | Date: 5/7/2018 | Done By: RW |
| Condition Description: | Object is in good condition -Light damage around entire image -Top two corners are worn -Foxing spots throughout (see annotated photograph) -Surface coating? Back -Foxing throughout (see annotated photograph) -3 hinges along top edge -Tide lines/water damage on top portion of image -Blue spotty accretions in center -Paper skimming on bottom center edge, left bottom corner, and near top center edge | | |
| Condition Notes: | | | |
| Condition: | Good | Date: 10/06/1993 | Done By: |
| Condition Description: | complete; TC image in light area of sky. Dent in print 6 1/2"N, 2"D TR | | |
| Condition: | Good | Date: 10/06/1993 | Done By: |
| Condition Description: | complete; Acid stains along top edge, foxing spots in margins one in | | |



Example of a condition diagram and report from UMFA
Salt Lake City



CONDITION REPORT

Condition Report Template is provided as part of Activity 1, and for future use. It includes a grid for mapping a condition diagram



Activity 1: Condition Report

Complete the following Condition Assessment for the object you are assigned (30 min)

Object Number: _____

Title/Name: _____

Creator/Maker/Trademark: _____

Description:

Dimensions (in/cm): H _____ W _____ D _____

Composition and Materials:

Previous Repairs or Conservation:

Weaknesses or Handling Concerns:

General Condition: Excellent Good Fair Poor

Examiner's name: _____ Date of Exam: _____

FRONT:

| | | | |
|--------|----|----|----|
| Notes: | TL | TC | TR |
| | CL | C | CR |
| | BL | BC | BR |

BACK:

| | | | |
|--------|----|----|----|
| Notes: | TL | TC | TR |
| | CL | C | CR |
| | BL | BC | BR |

CONDITION REPORT

Example: What if we were using this template to report the condition of this wooden sheep object



Activity 1: Condition Report

Complete the following Condition Assessment for the object you are assigned (30 min)

Object Number: _____

Title: _____

Creator: _____

Description: _____

Dimensions: _____

Component: _____

Previous: _____

Weight: _____



General Condition: Excellent Good Fair Poor

Examiner's name: _____ Date of Exam: _____

FRONT:

| | | | |
|--------|----|----|----|
| Notes: | TL | TC | TR |
| | CL | C | CR |
| | BL | BC | BR |

BACK:

| | | | |
|--------|----|----|----|
| Notes: | TL | TC | TR |
| | CL | C | CR |
| | BL | BC | BR |

CONDITION REPORT

Example: What if we were using this template to report the condition of this wooden sheep object...you could use a photograph on the grid, or a quick sketch



Activity 1: Condition Report

Complete the following Condition Assessment for the object you are assigned (30 min)

Object Number: _____

Title/Name: _____

Creator/Maker/Trademark: _____

Description:

Dimensions (in/cm): H _____ W _____ D _____

Composition and Materials:

Previous Repairs or Conservation:

Weaknesses or Handling Concerns:

General Condition: Excellent Good Fair Poor

Examiner's name: _____ Date of Exam: _____

FRONT:

| | |
|--------|--|
| Notes: | |
|--------|--|

BACK:

| | |
|--------|--|
| Notes: | |
|--------|--|

INCIDENT REPORT

Documentation of incidents of damage or disturbance to collections objects.

Promotes transparency, accountability, and notes important condition changes.



WHY INCIDENT REPORT?

1. As collections stewards, we have a responsibility to maintain the condition of our objects as best we can
2. Incident reporting creates a pathway for tracking immediate changes in condition
3. It promotes a culture of transparency in collections care and shared responsibility for preventing and responding to incidents or accidents



INCIDENT REPORT

Example:

Visitor bumps an exhibition case or platform, causing vibrations to objects



[Image Source](#)

INCIDENT REPORT

Example from the

Museum of

Contemporary Art

Cleveland



MOCA

MOCA ARTWORK INCIDENT REPORT

If a work of art is damaged or subject to some type of incident, please follow the following course of action:

1. IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY YOUR DIRECT SUPERVISOR AND THE FOLLOWING MOCA STAFF (IN THIS ORDER):

•
•
•

2. COMPLETE THE REPORT BELOW AND SUBMIT IT TO YOUR SUPERVISOR OR ONE OF THE STAFF MEMBERS LISTED ABOVE, IN THE SUGGESTED ORDER.

INCIDENT REPORTED BY:

DATE/TIME OF INCIDENT:

EXHIBITION:

ARTIST:

ARTWORK TITLE:

LOCATION OF INCIDENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

REASON FOR REPORT:

Describe damage/incident in as much detail as possible.

INCIDENT REPORT

Museum of Contemporary
Art Cleveland



Who

When

What

Where

Why

MOCA ARTWORK INCIDENT REPORT

If an a work of art is damaged or subject to some type of incident, please follow the following course of action:

1. IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY YOUR DIRECT SUPERVISOR AND THE FOLLOWING MOCA STAFF (IN THIS ORDER):

-
-
-

2. COMPLETE THE REPORT BELOW AND SUBMIT IT TO YOUR SUPERVISOR OR ONE OF THE STAFF MEMBERS LISTED ABOVE, IN THE SUGGESTED ORDER.

INCIDENT REPORTED BY:

DATE/TIME OF INCIDENT:

EXHIBITION:

ARTIST:

ARTWORK TITLE:

LOCATION OF INCIDENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

REASON FOR REPORT:

Describe damage/incident in as much detail as possible.

LUNCH 12:15-1:15



ACTIVITY/DISCUSSION

Complete the following form for the object you are assigned (30 min)

Handout



Workshop Part B: February 3, 2022
Alf Engen Ski Museum, Park City
Access and Artifact Handling

Activity 1: Condition Report

Complete the following Condition Assessment for the object you are assigned (30 min)

Object Number: _____

Title/Name: _____

Creator/Maker/Trademark: _____

Description:

Dimensions (in/cm): H _____ W _____ D _____

Composition and Materials:

Previous Repairs or Conservation:

Weaknesses or Handling Concerns:

OBJECT HANDLING & MOVING

HANDLING IS INTRODUCING RISK

- Minimize object handling whenever possible
- Access and Policies: consider who has handling access/privileges
- Handling creates opportunities for the impact of physical forces and dissociation
- Create storage that facilitates safe handling



ONE ARTIFACT AT A TIME

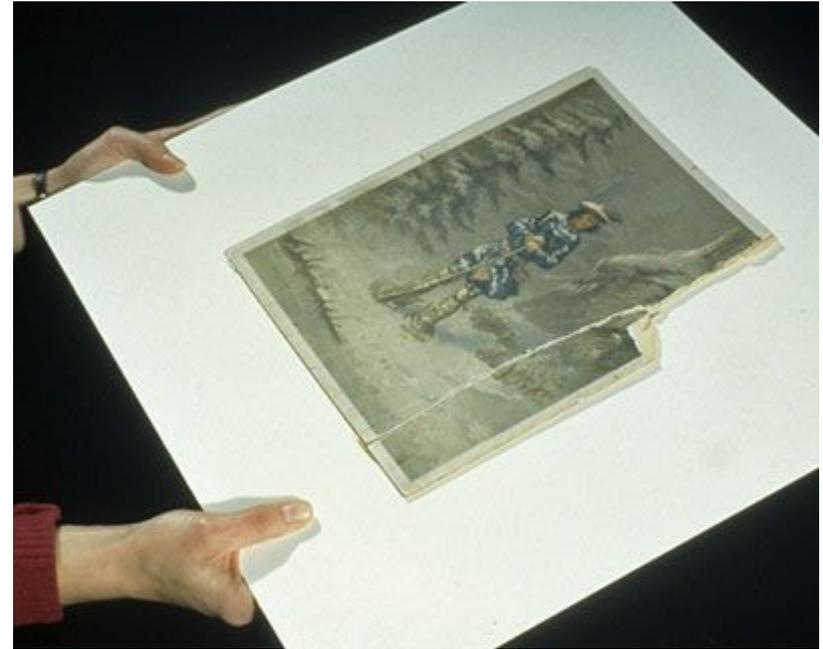
- Use common sense and great care!
- Train and retrain staff and stewards
- Proper handling is a skill that needs to be practiced
- Use carts, folders, and boxes to carry objects.
- Avoid stairs and take elevators when possible
- Use two hands and/or two people.



HANDLING PAPER

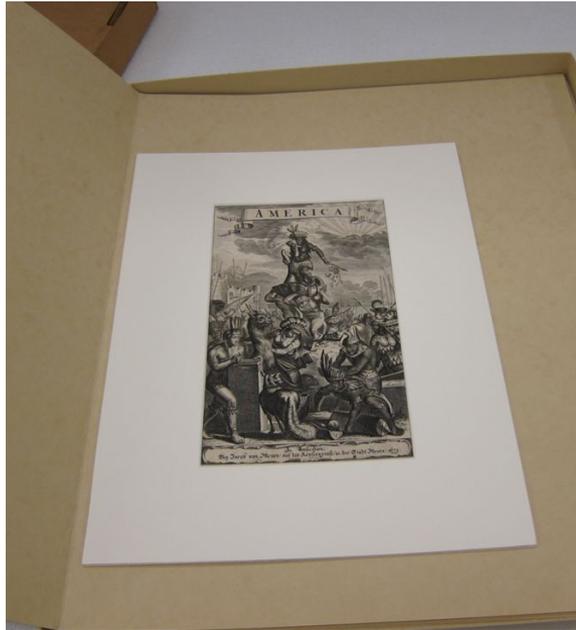


RIGID SUPPORT



This paper conservator is gently lifting and carrying this large work of art on paper (left). A safer option for us non paper conservators would be to move large items like this on a rigid support (potentially with help from another person) to prevent any bending.

HANDLING SUPPORTS



FLEXIBLE SUPPORTS



The purpose of these materials underneath is to provide support and prevent stress to the objects during motion. In addition to supporting the overall structure of the object, it gives protection to any friable or flaking bits that may easily be dislodged or disrupted.

HANDLING TEXTILES

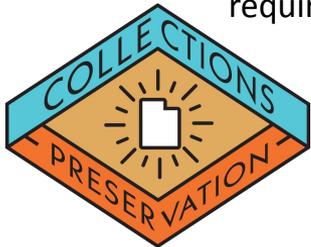
- Provide support!
- Do not hold by seams or areas of connection (example: sleeves on a dress)
- Roll on an archival tube
- Can become heavy quickly
- Do not fold; fan fold if necessary



HANDLING TEXTILES



Lay textiles flat whenever possible (of course, this requires a great deal of space)

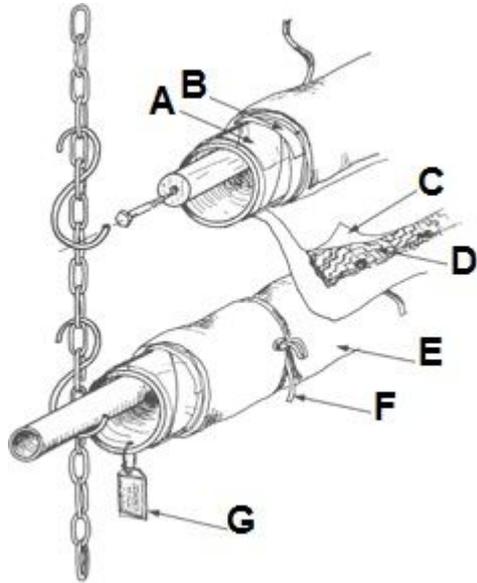


Hangers, while great for accessibility, are usually not good for historic textiles. Padding hangers out like the ones shown here can make them a better option.



Rolling textiles carefully onto rolls such as these protects them during handling and movement

HANDLING TEXTILES

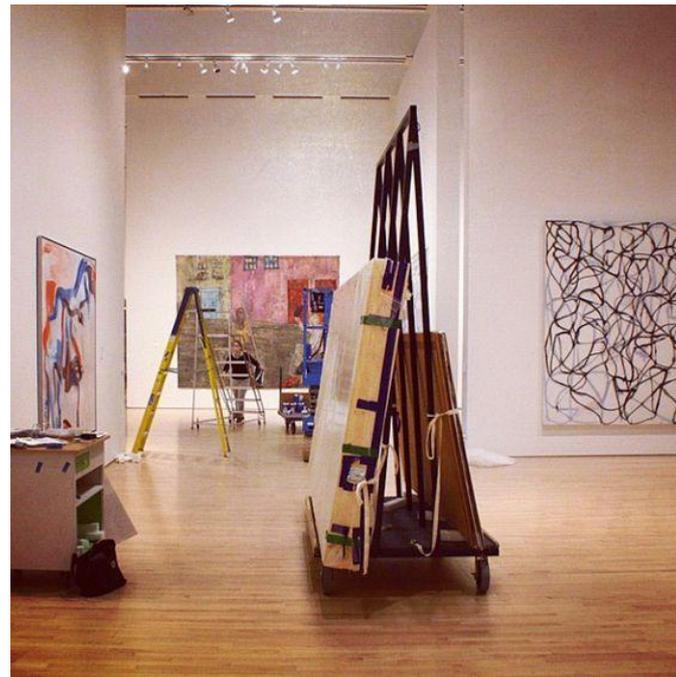


[Guide for creating rolled textile storage](#) from CCI



Image of two people moving a rolled textile after removing it from a rolling rack. These should always be carried by the ends of the tube, by two people.

PAINTINGS AND FRAMES



- Carry paintings flat or on a cart whenever possible. Minimize handling by the edges of a painting
- Never stack frames. Never lean against each other.
- Always use carpet feet, foam, or cardboard barriers.
- Use carts, dollies, and A-frames when possible.



HANDLING FRAMES

- *Always* lift with two hands from the bottom or both sides.
- Always get help from someone else if you must strain to lift the object yourself- protect the object AND your back!
- Glazing (glass) faces you.
- Keep object flat or upright in the direction it hangs in.
- Protect from light when possible.



GLOVES OR NO GLOVES?

GLOVES (NITRILE GLOVES)

- Photographs
- Gilded Frames
- Textiles (cotton gloves also work)
- When in doubt, wear gloves!!

Wearing gloves also protects you from harmful chemicals that may be on an object's surface, particularly objects that come from natural history collections or taxidermy collections

NO GLOVES (CLEAN HANDS)

- Paper



Nitrile Gloves



Cotton Gloves

Nitrile gloves (left) are preferable to cotton gloves (above). Cotton gloves absorb oils from hands, decrease dexterity and can snag or tear paper.

Nitrile gloves are essential to collections care!!!

HANDLING OBJECTS

- Remove mounts
- Use two hands at all times
- Do not lift or carry by protruding parts
- Be careful of hand placement and fragile elements
- Working with another person is best



HAND PLACEMENT



HAND PLACEMENT



HAND PLACEMENT



HAND PLACEMENT



UNDERSTAND YOUR OBJECT

Even brief visual condition assessments inform decisions about handling and moving objects. Understanding your object's sensitivities and composition is necessary. Take your time, and plan.

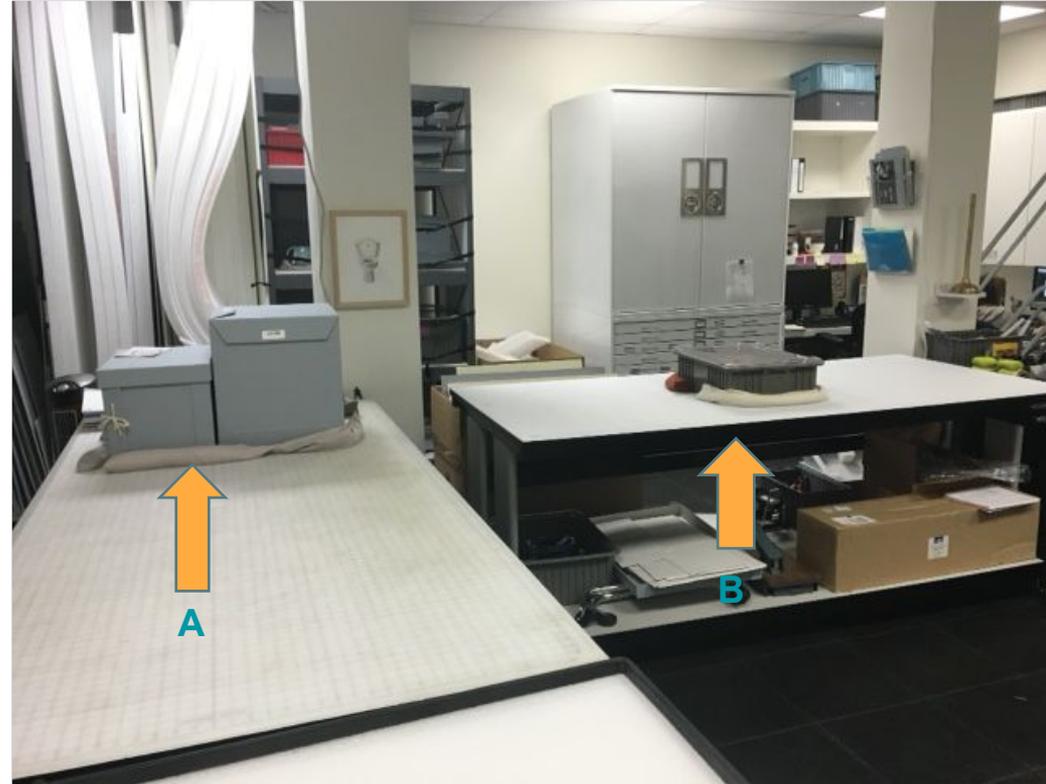


CCI 125773-0015
Figure 35. This treadle sewing machine table was lifted appropriately at the cast iron base with gloved hands.

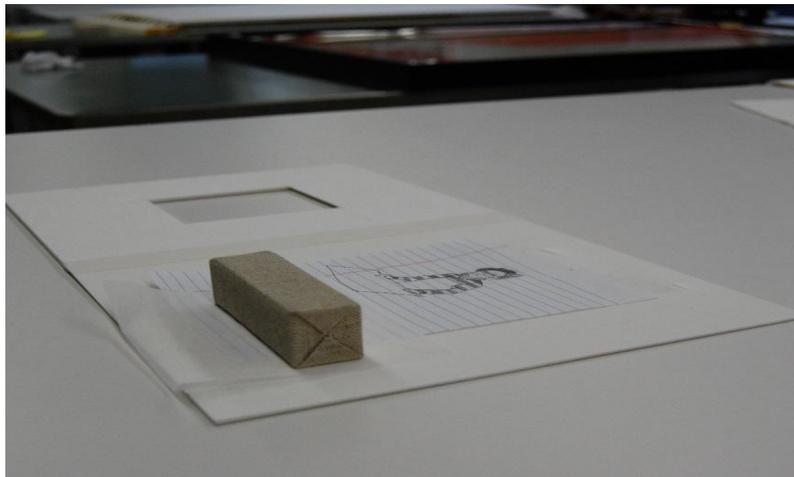


WORKSPACE

- PLAN your move from point A to point B
- Landing space for objects
- Secure
- Clean and organized
- Padding/containers for objects
- Spacious
- Object snakes/weights/supports



WORKSPACE



Prepare your workspace before bringing objects. Your space should be clean, clear of excess objects or tools, clear of food and drink. Your hands should be clean. Bring weights and tools that you will need to the workspace.

OBJECT LABELING

WHY LABEL OBJECTS?



DISSOCIATION/CUSTODIAL NEGLIGENCE

Natural tendency for ordered systems to fall apart over time, causing loss of objects, or object-related data, or the ability to retrieve or associate objects and data.



DISSOCIATION/CUSTODIAL NEGLIGENCE

Natural tendency for ordered systems to fall apart over time, causing loss of objects, or **object-related data**, or the ability to retrieve or **associate objects and data**.



“SIMPLY PUT”...

1. Know what stuff you have
2. Know what stuff you need
3. Know where it is
4. Take good care of it
5. Make sure someone gets some good out of it
6. Especially people you care about
7. And your neighbors



Before Marking...

Examine the object, determining what materials the object is made of, and identify a suitable location for marking.

Choose a location that is not obtrusive while the object is on display, but can be easily accessed and is visible while the object is stored.

Do not obscure maker's marks, major design elements, or old inventory numbers.

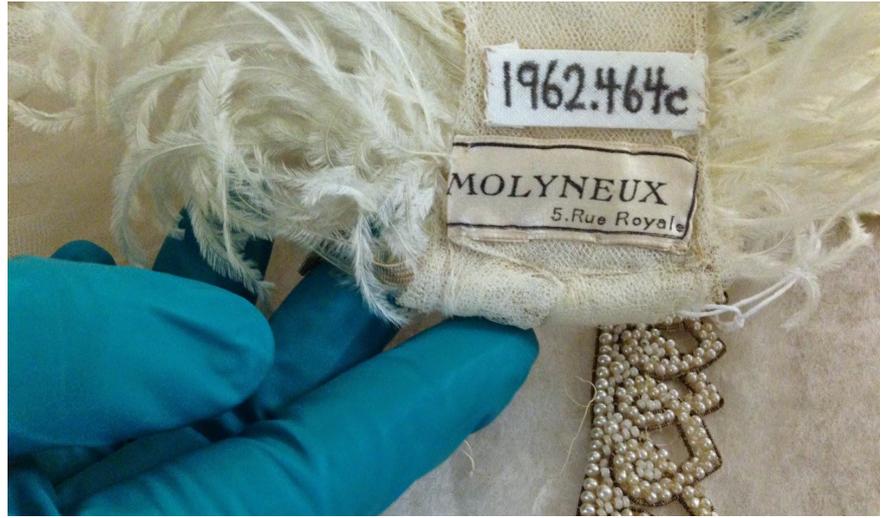
Do not choose a surface that is physically unstable.





ACTIVITY: How To Properly Mark And Label Textiles, Paper, 3D Objects

Instructions
at Stations



BREAK (10 Minutes)



ACTIVITIES:

Group 1: Practice labeling a variety of object types

Group 2: Gather to practice moving objects from one storage location to another



Workshop Part II: February 3, 2022
Alf Engen Ski Museum, Park City
Access and Artifact Handling

Activity 1: Condition Report

Object Number: _____

Title/Name: _____

Creator/Maker/Trademark: _____

Description:

Dimensions (in/cm): H _____ W _____ D _____

Composition and Materials:

Previous Repairs or Conservation:

Weaknesses or Handling Concerns:

General Condition: Excellent Good Fair Poor

Examiner's name: _____ Date of Exam: _____

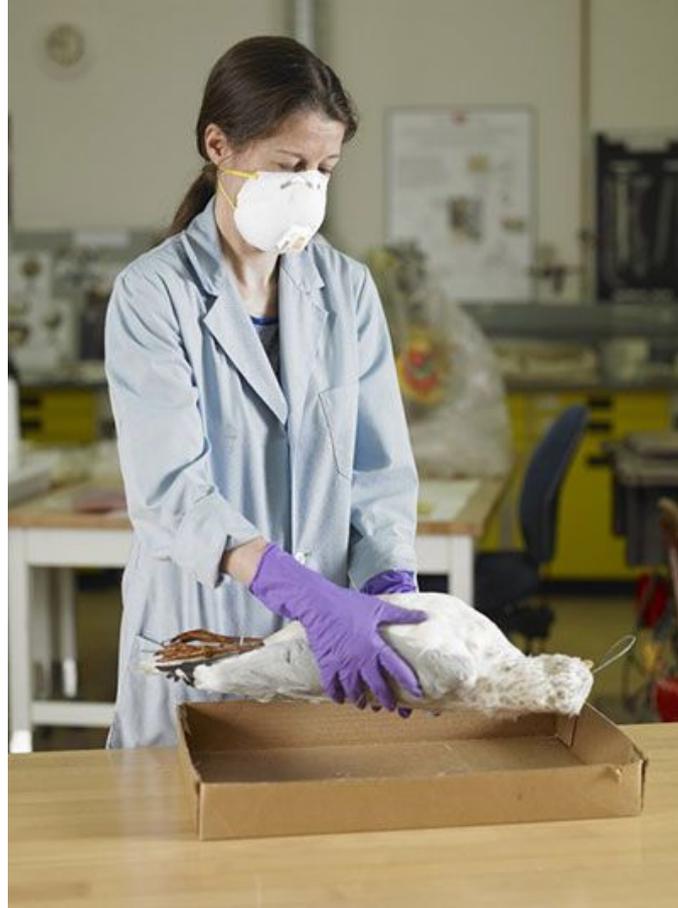
BREAK (10 Minutes)



Discussion: Reflections on Object Labeling



Discussion: Reflections on Handling and Moving Objects



Thank you!

Marie Desrochers | mdesrochers@utah.gov
<https://artsandmuseums.utah.gov/utah-collections-preservation/>

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NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES



UTAHHUMANITIES
Ideas in Action



Utah Division of
Arts & Museums